

Achieve
Success



DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
**TUITION ASSISTANCE
GRANT PROGRAM**



Realize Your
Dreams

ANNUAL REPORT



Believe In
Your Future



**ACADEMIC YEAR
2003-2004**



★ ★ ★ DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
State Education Office
GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
Anthony A. Williams, Mayor



A Message from the Mayor

Dear Citizens,

Congratulations to the D.C. Tuition Assistance Grant (DCTAG) Program! I continue to be impressed by the astounding success of DCTAG. Since its inauguration in 2000, DCTAG has provided grants totaling more than \$68 million, helping more than 6,700 District residents attend colleges and universities in the District of Columbia and throughout the United States.

The DCTAG program has helped make the dream of attending college a reality for District residents, many of whom were the first in their families to attend college. DCTAG has helped District residents defray the rising costs of college tuition at public colleges and universities with its average award amount of \$5,700. In the 2002-03 school year the DC Tuition Assistance Grant Program made it financially possible for over 500 District high school students to attend the top 100 liberal arts schools according to the US News and World Report's 2003 edition of *America's Best Colleges*.

We are grateful for the steadfast support of members of Congress who have graciously guided this program. All of their hard work enables this program to enjoy enormous success and allows our students to continue taking advantage of this unprecedented opportunity to attend the colleges and universities of their choice.

Sincerely,



Anthony A. Williams, Mayor



A Message from the State Education Officer



Dear District Residents and Stakeholders:

For the fourth consecutive year, District residents have taken advantage of the DCTAG program, which has paid the difference between in-state and out-of-state tuition rates at public institutions of higher learning across the nation and in the District of Columbia. DCTAG disbursements have nearly tripled in four years, from \$9 million in the 2000-2001 academic year to \$24.9 million in the 2003-2004 academic year. Without a doubt, the DCTAG program continues to be a cornerstone of the Mayor's goal to strengthen children, youth, families and elders.

DCTAG has made a number of notable adjustments in its program implementation for the upcoming 2004-2005 academic year to provide greater customer service to our applicants including a redesigned application and an interactive voice response telephone system. Most importantly, we are partnering with other educational entities in the city to strengthen the program's retention rate. These operational improvements coupled with strategic marketing and outreach efforts will make certain that DCTAG remains successful in the coming years.

Our continued thanks go to Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton and her esteemed congressional colleagues for helping so many of our residents realize their dream of going to college. We also want to thank the Council of the District of Columbia for its efforts to promote the program in neighborhoods across the city.

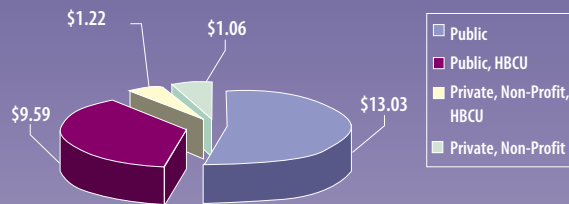
Finally, I would like to recognize and thank the staff of the DCTAG program, particularly Interim Director, Kelly Valentine, whose dedication to the District's young people has contributed greatly to the success of this program and keeps it on the cutting edge.

Sincerely,

Deborah A. Gist
Interim State Education Officer

The D.C. Tuition Assistance Grant Program – *At a Glance*

**DCTAG 03-04 Disbursements By
Institution Type (in Millions)**



GRANT AMOUNTS

The D.C. Tuition Assistance Grant (DCTAG) pays the difference between in-state and out-of-state tuition up to \$10,000 a year with a lifetime maximum of \$50,000. This allows college students who are domiciled in the District of Columbia and pursuing their first undergraduate degree to attend any public college or university in the nation and pay the same tuition as residents of that school's state. The grant amount is paid directly to the college or university. The student is responsible for paying the remainder of the tuition amount.

Undergraduate students who choose to attend private colleges and universities in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area and any private Historically Black College or University (HBCU) in the nation are eligible to receive a grant for up to \$2,500 a year with a lifetime maximum of \$12,500. Grant awards are pro-rated if a student attends college on at least a part-time basis.

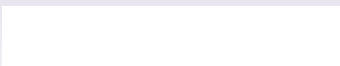
APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY

- Applicants must currently be District residents and have lived in the District for at least 12 consecutive months prior to the beginning of their freshman year of college.

- Applicants must have graduated from high school or received a GED after January 1, 1998. (Applicants who graduated before 1998 and who attended an eligible college or university during the Spring 2002 semester may also be eligible.)
- Applicants must be enrolled at least half-time in an undergraduate degree or certificate program.
- Applicants must not have already completed a B.A./B.S. degree.
- Applicants must maintain good academic standing, as defined by the institutions they are attending, in order to renew the grant.
- Applicants must not be in default of any federal student loans.

SCHOOL ELIGIBILITY

- Public, non-profit institutions. (state colleges/universities)
- Public and private, non-profit HBCUs.
- Private, non-profit institutions in the D.C. metropolitan area.
- Must be eligible to receive Title IV funding.



2003-2004 Academic Year A Year of Growth

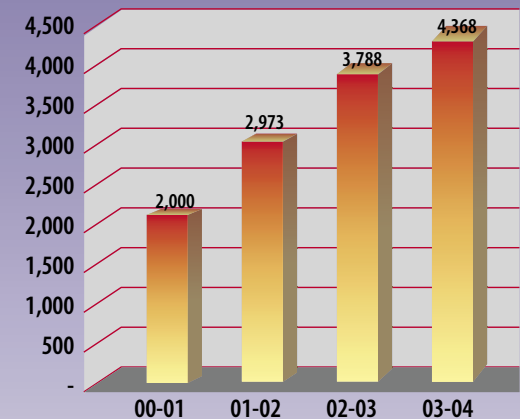
The D.C. Tuition Assistance Grant program has continued to grow exponentially over the past four years. More than 5,400 applicants applied for the grant during the 2003-2004 academic year with 4,368 applicants being awarded the grant. Not only has there been an increase of students participating in the program, but the average award amounts are increasing as well. The average DC-TAG grant grew 27% over four program years from \$4,500 in the 2000/2001 academic year to \$5,700 in the 2003-2004 academic year. The program realized its highest expenditures in 2003-2004, disbursing \$24.9 million to colleges and universities throughout the country, representing a 24% increase over the 2002-2003 academic year.

As college tuition costs continuing to rise at a national average rate of 14% a year, the number of students receiving the maximum award amount of \$10,000 a year has also increased. In 2000-2001, 84 students received the maximum yearly award amount of \$10,000, representing 4% of the total number of students who received the grant that year. By 2003-2004, 643 students received the maximum yearly award amount, representing 15% of the total number of students who received the grant that year. The College Board's 2003 publication, *Trends in College Pricing*, indicates that the public four-year tuition growth of the past three years represents a much more significant departure from historical patterns. The 13 percent real increase in 2003 was the highest in at least 30 years. These increases in tuition disproportionately rest in the out of state rate. The increases in student participation and tuition rates are cost drivers that present a very real potential for a reduction in grant amounts or forcing program structuring to fit a need-based model.

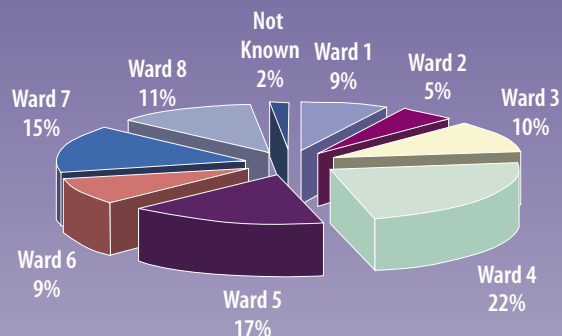
"I have been a grantee of the D.C. Tuition Assistance Grant since 2000. I graduated from Norfolk State University in December 2004 with a degree in Computer Science. I would like to thank D.C. TAG for awarding me \$40,000 for my college tuition. I hope that this program continues to assist other students to reach their goals."

Natasha McKeiver

Awarded Students by Year



**DCTAG Students
by Ward**



Our Grantees



Every Ward in the City

From east of the Anacostia River to west of Rock Creek Park, DCTAG grantees come from all over the city. Ward 4 continues to lead the way, at 22% of applicants using the program, followed closely by Wards 5, 7, 8 and 3, at 17%, 15%, 11% and 10% respectively.

College Choices

Seventy-six percent of DCTAG grantees attend public colleges and universities, including public HBCUs, which accounted for 90% of the funds disbursed over the life of the program for a total of \$61.4M. Twenty-four percent of DCTAG grantees attend private colleges and universities in the Washington metropolitan area as well as private HBCUs, which accounted for 10% of the funds disbursed over the life of the program for a total of \$6.9M.

DCTAG grantees attend elite public institutions such as the University of Virginia, University of Michigan, Pennsylvania State University and the University of California - Berkeley; HBCUs with rich heritages and legacies of excellence include Morehouse, Spelman, North Carolina A&T and Florida A&M, as well as local jewels such as Georgetown, Howard, Catholic, George Washington, and American universities.

DCTAG grantees are currently enrolled at over 251 public institutions, 61 public and private HBCUs and 13 private institutions in the Washington Metropolitan Area. The number of colleges and universities participating in the program increased to 625 in the 2003-2004 academic year. Students are attending public colleges and universities in 47 states; from Alaska to Hawaii, Maine to Florida, New York to California and all points in between. When students use their grants to attend state schools, those state education programs are strengthened because those schools are receiving additional out-of-state tuition rates.

Making a Difference

Data derived from a recent high school survey of DCPS and public charter school graduates indicate that for 75% of these applicants, DCTAG is making a difference in their

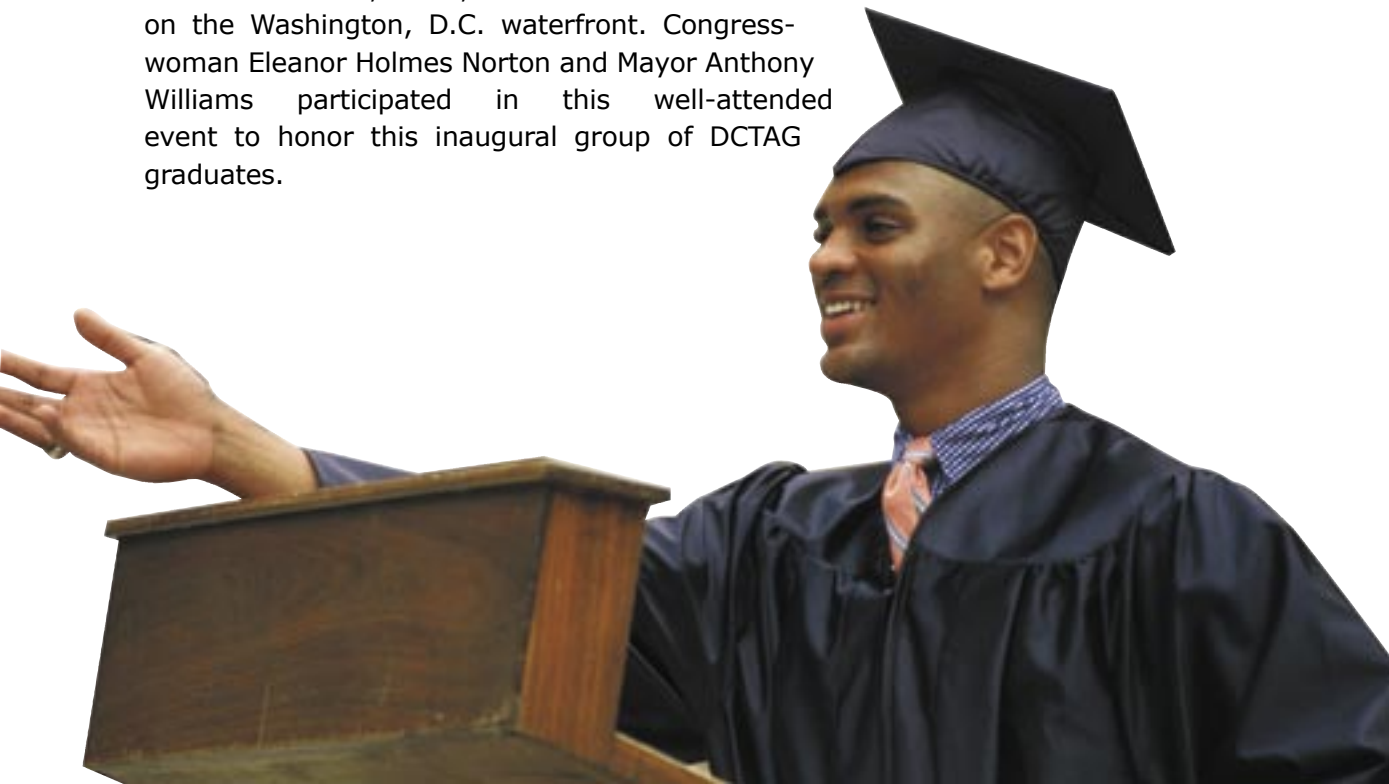
decisions to continue their education beyond high school. Sixty-five percent of applicants surveyed indicate that the existence of DCTAG has enabled them to exercise their right to choose the college they feel will best suit their needs. Over half of the applicants surveyed will be the first in their families to attend college.

Getting the Word Out

In the 2003-2004 academic year, the program conducted over 135 workshops, trade shows and similar types of events throughout District communities. These sessions were held in churches, community-based organizations, libraries, political organizations, colleges and universities, professional organizations and high schools throughout the city.

A Time to Celebrate

Six hundred and one of the 2000-2001 grantees reached their goals of obtaining a college education and graduated in the Spring of 2004. In recognition of this milestone achievement, DCTAG partnered with Radio One, Inc. to host the first ever DCTAG Graduation Celebration held on June 22, 2004, at the H2O Restaurant on the Washington, D.C. waterfront. Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton and Mayor Anthony Williams participated in this well-attended event to honor this inaugural group of DCTAG graduates.



“My daughter, Stephanie, graduated from Perdue University in December 2004. It was a solemn and joyous event and we did not forget to whom we owe a great debt of gratitude. Our thanks go out to the Mayor and the staff of the D.C. Tuition Assistance Grant program. Stephanie is now applying to local area schools for her graduate degree.”

Ursula Petzing



“I attend Tennessee State University (TSU) where I am a third year student. Graduating from Eastern Senior High School in 2001, I had the grade point average and competence to get into several universities, I chose TSU. Unfortunately, TSU did not offer any financial aid. I was told that my mother, a single parent with three children and an income of \$30,000, made enough to get me through my freshman year.

Since 2001, the tuition at TSU has grown tremendously yet I have persevered. I leveraged the resources provided through DCTAG, DCLEAP, DCCAP and other private scholarship funds. I am proud to report that I will graduate in May 2005, not only with the support of my family, but with the support of dedicated staff from these District programs. The help was not in vain.”

LaKeisha Grimes



The Journey of Four Years

Prior to the existence of the D.C. Tuition Assistance Grant program, D.C. high school graduates who wanted to attend a public institution other than the University of the District of Columbia paid non-resident tuition rates or attended private institutions. During the 1999-2000 academic year, dependent undergraduates from the District of Columbia paid an average of \$7,890 per year in tuition, minus all grant aid. This amount was more than twice the national average for dependent applicants (\$3,215), even though the poverty rate in the District of Columbia was among the highest in the nation¹.

Legislative History

Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-DC) and Rep. Tom Davis (R-VA) introduced H.R. 974 in March 1999. Backed with strong bipartisan support, H.R. 974 moved through the House and Senate with urgency. The Committee on Government Reform Subcommittee on the District of Columbia approved the bill by voice vote on April 15, 1999, the full committee approved H.R. 974 by voice vote on May 19, 1999, and the U.S. House of Representatives approved it by voice vote on May 24, 1999. The bill was passed by the Senate in October of 1999 and President Clinton signed it into law on November 12, 1999 (P.L. 106-98).

Up and Running

Despite the challenges of starting a new program quickly, Mayor Williams and the inaugural staff achieved the ambitious goal of setting up and implementing the program by the fall of 2000. Mayoral Order 2000-138 was signed on September 7, 2000, establishing the D.C. Tuition Assistance Grant program. In October 2000, DCTAG made its first grant of \$3,759 to a student attending Georgia Institute of Technology. We are extremely proud to say that this student graduated in May 2004. When the 2000-2001 school year came to a close on June 30, 2001, DCTAG disbursed \$9 million to 2,000 students attending colleges and universities across 37 different states.

¹Kane, Thomas J. "Evaluating the Impact of the D.C. Tuition Assistance Grant Program" University of California, Los Angeles. Preliminary Draft, July 2004.

Program Expansion

During the next two years, DCTAG enjoyed huge success. In the spring 2002, the legislation was expanded to provide grants to students attending private historically black colleges and universities around the country. Previously, only students attending historically black colleges and universities in the District of Columbia, Maryland and Virginia were eligible to receive the grant.

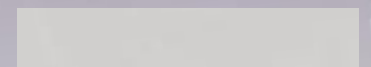
Students were no longer required to attend college within three years of graduating from high school. The amendment also provided funding opportunity to the District's adult student population. Adult college students who graduated before 1998 and were currently enrolled at an eligible college during the spring 2002 semester became eligible to receive DCTAG funds. Additionally, students without high school diplomas or GEDs became eligible to receive the DC Tuition Assistance Grant as long as they were accepted as regular freshman students at an eligible institution.

Growing Pains

High student participation rates as well as rising tuition costs at both public and private institutions indicate that unless additional funds were invested, the DCTAG program would no longer be able to assist all students that apply. This inability to sustain the program's growth could result in a scaling back of the program by reducing lifetime award amounts or yearly award amounts, or limiting access to only those students who demonstrate exceptional merit or financial need.

“My daughter graduated from Tennessee State University in August 2003. I owe special thanks to the D.C. Tuition Assistance Grant Program for making this possible for my family. This program has definitely made a difference in our lives. My daughter is the first in our family to graduate from college for many generations.”

Tina Carter



“I am a D.C. resident with three sons, and have taken advantage of the DCTAG program for the last four years. I am proud to say that this is the most efficient D.C. program that I have experienced in my 52 years of residency. From the application process, through the annual renewals, I have had nothing but good experiences. Keep up the good work.”

Dale Ellis



Looking Ahead

A number of programmatic enhancements have been made to provide District residents with the highest standard of customer service during with the 2004-2005 academic year. Following the best practices of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), our redesigned application is more user friendly, providing clear instructions, explanatory notes for each question and an expanded glossary. Application processing time has been reduced nearly 40 percent, resulting in the issuance of a Letter of Eligibility within 20 business days. We met this goal through redesigned business processes, state-of-the-art optical character recognition technology and continued staff development and training.

In the 2005-2006 academic year, the SEO will release its OneApp. OneApp is a newly developed application which combines the DCTAG / DCLEAP and DC Adoption applications into one. Building on the design of the 2004 DCTAG application, the SEO OneApp will enable students to significantly reduce the amount of paperwork and time spent in applying for the District's higher education financial grants by allowing them to apply for all grant programs using only one application. Additionally, a collaborative effort between the Office of the Chief Technology Officer (OCTO) and DCTAG will result in the availability of an online application to be launched in March 2005 in time for the 2005-2006 academic year.

The current strategic plan outlines strategies that will result in higher retention rates among DCTAG grantees. These strategies will stretch DCTAG beyond its current focus of enabling college-bound District residents to have greater choices among institutions of higher learning. Our vision is for every grantee to graduate! Toward this effort, we will continue to strengthen partnerships with other educational stakeholders such as the D.C. College Access Program, Upward Bound, and the Educational Opportunity Center. We will also work closely with participating colleges and universities to identify models and best practices that will support the program's retention objectives.

DCTAG STUDENTS HAVE ATTENDED THESE COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES



Alabama State University	Fashion Institute of Technology	Michigan State University	South Carolina State University	University of Massachusetts - Amherst
Allen University	Fisk University	Montgomery College	Southeastern University	University of Memphis
American University	Florida Agricultural & Mechanical University	Morehouse College	Spelman College	University of Michigan - Ann Arbor
Bethune-Cookman College	Gallaudet University	Morgan State University	State University of New York at Stony Brook	University of Nebraska
Binghamton University - State University of New York	George Mason University	Nebraska Indian Community College	Temple University	University of Nevada - Las Vegas
Bowie State University	George Washington University	New Mexico State University	Tennessee State University	University of North Carolina - Chapel Hill
Capitol College	Georgetown University	North Carolina Agricultural & Technical State University	Texas A&M University	University of North Carolina - Asheville
Catholic University of America	Georgia Institute of Technology	Northern Virginia Community College	Texas College	University of North Carolina - Asheville
Central Wyoming College	Georgia State University	Ohio State University (The)	Trinity University	University of Puerto Rico
Cheyney University of Pennsylvania	Grambling State University	Old Dominion University	University of Alabama	University of Rhode Island
Clark Atlanta University	Hampton University	Pennsylvania State University (The)	University of Arizona (The)	University of South Carolina
Clemson University	Howard University	Prince George's Community College	University of California-Berkeley (The)	University of Wisconsin - Green Bay
College of William & Mary	Idaho State University	Purchase College of the State University of New York	University of California, Los Angeles	University of Wisconsin - Green Bay
Colorado State University	Indiana State University	Purdue University	University of Delaware	Virginia Commonwealth University
Columbia Union College	Indiana University - Bloomington	Rutgers - The State University of New Jersey	University of Florida	Virginia Military Institute
Community College of Philadelphia	Johnson C. Smith University	San Bernardino Valley College	University of Georgia	Virginia State University
Cornell University	Kent State University	San Francisco State University	University of Hawaii at Hilo	Wilberforce University
CUNY - Hunter College	Lincoln University - PA	Shaw University	University of Illinois at Urbana - Champaign	Winston-Salem State University
Delaware State University	Louisiana State University in Shreveport		University of Maryland - College Park	Xavier University of Louisiana
East Carolina University	Marymount University		University of Maryland - Eastern Shore	
Eastern Kentucky University				



Government of the District of Columbia

Anthony A. Williams, Mayor

District of Columbia
Tuition Assistance Grant Program

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